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She continues living with them and is supported by them. Barren women return to their own families on the death of the husband. 428

The estate of a childless person is divided equally among the surviving brothers and sisters by the same mother. If none of these are living, it is divided among the brothers' children. The sisters' children, who will belong to other lineages, do not share in it. A woman's estate is divided equally among her children. A man's estate is divided into two or more equal shares, one for his children by each of his wives. Each share is then further subdivided according to the number of children.

Brothers and sisters inherit in equal portions except that daughters rarely receive land if there are any sons. This is designed to keep land in the lineage, for if inherited by a woman it would ultimately pass to her children and thus be lost. If a daughter has married within the village she is given the equivalent of her share of land in money or cattle. If she has married outside she forfeits her right to inherit land or its equivalent and usually receives less than her normal share of the other goods. 428 596

Among the Menabe, the estates of unmarried men and all other childless individuals are divided as among the Hongo. An only wife, or the first wife in a polygamous household, has an absolute right to one-third of her husband's estate, exclusive of property which he may have inherited after the marriage. This holds even if she is barren. The largest share of the residual estate, usually amounting to about one-half, goes to the eldest son, who becomes head of the family group on his father's death (see The Lineage). The rest is divided equally among the other sons and daughters except that women who have married outside the village receive a smaller share. A woman's estate is divided equally among her children unless she is the mother of the family's eldest son. If so, he receives the greater part of her estate as well as his father's. 428

Secondary wives in polygamous households cannot inherit from the husband. He usually provides for them by gifts before his death. Individual ownership of land is so recent in this group that there are, as yet, no fixed rules governing its inheritance. Most of it seems to be taken by the eldest son and it is rarely given to daughters. [595]

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VI. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

THE FAMILY

594 The Tanala family consists of a man, his wife or wives and their children. Among the Menabe the father is, in theory, the absolute head of the family with authority over the persons and property of not only his own children but his sons' children as well. Actually his authority varies with his personality and I even found a few cases in which fathers had been deserted by their children and reduced to want. Sons are not considered heads of families until after their father's death. Among the Ikongo authority over the children seems to be vested in the mother, while control of the family property is vested in the father. Such a condition might easily arise in a group which was in transition from a matriarchal system with communal [591] ownership to a patriarchal one with individual ownership. In both groups the whole family, including married sons, normally lives together in part of the ward belonging to their lineage (see The Village).

592 595 Although no exact figures are available, at least two-thirds of the Menabe families seem to be monogamous. Polygyny is common, but is only possible to a man with some wealth and social prestige. Among the Ikongo, polygyny is somewhat commoner, but by no means universal. In both cases each wife has her own house, built by the husband at the time of their marriage. In all but two or three of the Menabe gentes the husband must spend one day with each wife, in regular rotation. On that day he assists her and sleeps in her house. If he stays with one wife on another's day, the injured wife is entitled to divorce with alimony (see Divorce). She usually waives this, but the husband must make her a public apology and a substantial present. Among the Ikongo, who hold land individually, each wife is assigned a share of the husband's land. He has to help her to cultivate this on her day, while she feeds herself, her children, and the husband while with her, from its produce. The first wife is called the *Vady Be*, the second *Vady Ivo*, and the third *Vady Masay*. There is no special term for additional wives and a man rarely has more than three. The *Vady Be*, who is always the first wife married, is superior to the others socially and helps the husband to administer the family finances. Often she holds the family purse for current expenses and the others, including the husband, have to apply to her for money. Wives pride themselves on economy and good manage-

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ment and money is never disbursed without a long argument. The husband keeps most of his belongings in the *Vady Be's* house and considers it his real home. 595 592

In spite of the separate housing for the wives and married sons, the Tanala family is well integrated. It is customary for the entire group to eat together in the house where the father is on that day and cooking is done in rotation. The wives aid each other in all their activities, look after each other's children, etc. There can be no doubt that polygyny does a great deal to lighten the labor of the women and they are quite as much in favor of it as the men.

The family is normally patrilocal, but among the Menabe a strong and rich family may insist that their women continue to live with them after marriage. In this case the husband comes to the wife's village or ward in the village, builds the new house there, and assists the men of her lineage in working their common land. Widows with children continue to live with their husband's family or lineage and if they remarry the new husband is usually compelled to come and live with them. This is to safeguard the children, who might otherwise be slighted or abused by their stepfather. Under the matrilocal arrangement the father has little authority in the family and the children feel more closely bound to their mother's lineage than to their father's. It is considered rather disgraceful for a man to consent to live with his wife's kin and ordinarily only one who is poor or of little account will do so. 591 [556]

THE LINEAGE

I have chosen this term to designate a relationship group which is very important in Tanala social and economic life. It is intermediate between the family proper and the larger units of village and gens. The lineage is composed of the recent descendants of one man and his wife or wives, tracing in the male line. Attached to it, but not altogether a part of it, are the wives of lineage members, children of lineage women whose marriages have been matrilocal and, in many cases, one or more families of hereditary slaves. 596

The lineage might be described as either an expanded family or an embryonic gens. The natives themselves take the former view and use the same term for it as for the family, but it is much larger than a family in the European sense, often numbering as many as seventy-five to one hundred persons. At the same time, it differs from a true gens in the closer blood relationship existing between members, its closer social and economic integration and its rather transitory nature.

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565 special rights, as that of killing cattle for the commoners, but they
618 were rigidly excluded from any part in the government.

REGULATION OF MARRIAGE

582 Courtship, the ceremony of marriage, ceremonies used for lifting the ban on certain degrees of relationship, etc., have been described in the section, Life Cycle of the Individual. Only the social control of marriage will be treated here. The only bar to marriage among the Tanala is relationship in certain degrees, but there are opinions as to the desirability of certain types of union which, although not formulated as prohibitions, do much to influence individual choice. Marriages between the members of different generations, or between persons with a marked disparity in age, are usually looked upon with disfavor and are infrequent. Marriages within the lineage are considered undesirable and are very rare. The Menabe were formerly strongly in favor of marriage within the village, but there has been a change in their attitude within the last fifty years. They now favor marriage outside the village, saying that such marriages give the young people a greater range of choice and are more permanent. The Ikongo have always favored marriage outside the village, perhaps
[618] because of their greater fear of incest. Marriages within the gens are considered highly desirable by both groups and were normal in ancient times. Since the French domination has put an end to wars, intergens marriages have increased considerably.

572 Relationships controlling marriage are based on actual blood
582 relationship, on relationship through marriage, and on relationship established by the *mifanangena* ("blood brotherhood") ceremony. In
[595] polygynous families the children stand in the same relation to the relatives of their father's plural wives as to those of their own mother. If a widow with children remarries, the children stand in the same relation to the new husband's family as to that of their actual father. Relationship based on marriage is as binding as blood relationship in regulating marriages. The children of persons who have performed the *mifanangena* stand in the same relation to each other as the children of actual brothers, sisters, or brother and sister, but, as a control on marriage, this relationship is usually allowed to lapse in the second or third generation.

582 The Ikongo forbid marriage between parent and child, brother and sister, uncle and niece, aunt and nephew, and between the children of two brothers, two sisters or brother and sister. These prohibitions are more extensive than is usually the case in Madagascar and

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582 [595] women marry. Under the old conditions of frequent warfare there was a shortage of men. The most desirable girls were chosen first and became head wives, after which the surplus was absorbed by plural marriages. Today, when the sexes are more nearly equal in numbers, plural marriages seem to be on the wane.

584 Among the Menabe, marriages were formerly arranged by the parents. Children were usually married young, before they had formed strong preferences. The consent of the child was not necessary, but old people say that it was considered cruel to force a child into a distasteful union and that such a thing was very rare in practice. Usually the young people were indifferent. At the present time marriages are arranged by the parties themselves, with the consent of their parents and the village council. They come to an agreement before notifying the old people. The natives approve of the new method and say that such unions are more permanent than the old type. Among the Ikongo, marriages are usually arranged by the young people, with the consent of their parents.

Courting takes place in the children's houses already described. Most of it is public. The boy and girl are rarely alone together for long, since the girl's brothers, sisters and friends are constantly dropping in. There is often spicy repartee and a certain amount of good-natured horse play, but little physical love making. The boy may make small gifts to the girl, but this does not seem to be necessary. At the present time matches are sometimes arranged in a few hours between boys and girls from different villages who have met at feasts or while traveling.

In arranging marriages economic considerations seem to be uppermost in the minds of even the young people. In general, a man is content if he gets a wife who is strong and industrious while a woman is satisfied with any hard working husband, the richer the better. Only ordinary congeniality is expected. What little romance there is seems to be practically limited to first marriages. Plural wives are taken on purely economic grounds and have to pass the scrutiny of the first wife.

Romantics are universally considered fools. Nevertheless, I heard of a few love matches in which couples had married in the face of opposition and to their economic disadvantage. If such a match is forbidden by the parents, the children will do everything possible to change their stand. Failing this, they will begin to have intercourse surreptitiously and continue until the girl becomes pregnant. The boy will then present an ox to the girl's father, if

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585 After the betrothal the girl continues to live with her parents, sometimes for as much as two months. The period is not fixed and in the Zafimaniry gens her relatives try to prolong it as much as possible. The boy visits her and sleeps with her. She spends her time in making her part of the equipment for the new house: mats, baskets, and a raffia mosquito net and pillows. The boy prepares the house and his share of the equipment. On an auspicious day a number of the boy's relatives go to get the girl. The two families usually agree on the number in advance, so that each will know how many people they will have to feast. The girl's family feasts the delegation at her house. An equal number of her relatives then accompany her to the boy's house, where they are feasted in turn. After the feast, all her relatives go home. The young people live with [591] the groom's father for a week, then go to their own house. Among the Zafimaniry the bride, on entering the house of her parents-in-law for the first time, presents them with her best mat and receives their thanks and blessing.

The ceremonies are the same for plural as for first marriages, but are usually somewhat less elaborate, with smaller feasts. The same holds for remarriages of widows or divorced women.

PLURAL MARRIAGES

837 Polyandry is mentioned in some Tanala legends, but it is interwoven with other fabulous details and there is no reason to believe that it ever existed as a recognized institution. In making the *mifanangena* ("blood brotherhood") pact, men often agree to hold their wives in common, but they rarely if ever do this when they live in the same village. The community of wives, therefore, resolves itself into reciprocal sexual hospitality. This is operative even during the absence of the husband.

595 Polygyny is still common. Under the old regime there was no limit to the number of wives the king might have. The last king of Ambohimanga had thirty-three. Other men are limited to four but rarely take the full quota. The number depends on their wealth and personal desirability.

It is permissible for a man to marry sisters as plural wives, but there is some feeling against it and it is rare. It is believed that sisters will be more jealous of each other than wives who come from different families. The Zafindriantrova gens has prohibited the practice in recent years, due to one sister having poisoned another who was a fellow wife.

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Women seem to be quite as much in favor of polygyny as men. 595
While they often become jealous of other wives, the practical advantages of the arrangement are considerable. There is no hired labor and slaves were never very numerous, so the housewife has always been confronted by an acute servant problem. After a woman has been married a few years and has small children to look after, she will often urge her husband to marry another wife to lighten her labor. Husbands may, of course, take plural wives on their own initiative, but before doing so they must have the consent of all their previous wives. The domestic arrangements in polygynous families have been discussed in the chapter on Social Organization.

DIVORCE

Divorce is easy and fairly common. It is not accompanied by 586
any ceremony. Among the Menabe men can divorce at will, but the wife has a claim to one-third of the husband's property, exclusive of land. She retains this even if she has been guilty of flagrant misconduct.

A woman can divorce her husband either with or without cause. If she has no cause, she simply returns to her own family, who will receive and protect her. In this case she forfeits all property rights. Divorces with cause are granted by the village council and entitle the wife to one-third of her husband's property, land excepted. The recognized causes for divorce are: 1. Adultery during the wife's pregnancy. 2. Adultery when the husband has previously been detected and forgiven on a promise of reform. 3. Marriage of a plural wife without the offended wife's permission. 4. Spending a wife's day with another wife. This is considered more serious than ordinary adultery. 5. Severe mistreatment resulting in maiming or permanent injury.

In some gentes the extent of the injuries justifying a divorce is specified at the time of marriage. The Zafindiamanana say, in the marriage address: "We let you have our daughter, but her eyes, her hair and her limbs do not belong to you. You may use her and have her work for you, but if you put out her eye, or pull out her hair, or break one of her limbs, she returns to us."

In general, it is considered bad form for a woman to divorce her husband, even with cause. The village council will reprimand her and liken her to a crowing hen, although it cannot refuse to grant her the divorce if she insists. Usually the matter is settled out of court, the husband making her a public apology and gift.